

HEXHAM
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE

Year ending 31st December, 1909.

Hexham :

R. Robson & Sons, Printers, The Abbey Press.

Medical Officer's Annual Report

FOR 1909.

NETHERTON,

HEXHAM,

January 10th, 1910.

DEAR SIR,

It is again my privilege and duty to bring to your notice, and that of the Urban District Council, my Annual Report on the sanitary condition of Hexham, as measured by the death rate. The climatic conditions of the year were favourable to health, there having been no continuance of either extreme heat or cold. The rainfall was below the average. During the year, 111 deaths were registered in your district, being 24 less than in 1908. Of these 111 deaths, 18 took place in the Union Workhouse, 10 of which were outside your area, reducing the deaths to 101. A newly-born infant was found dead early in January 1909, in a field within your boundary. It was afterwards proven to have been brought from a considerable distance outside your area. This case, I consider, should be excluded from your statistics, thus bringing down the number of deaths in your district for the year 1909 to 100, which, on an estimated population of 8,500, gives a death rate of 11·764 per 1,000 per annum.

214 births have been registered during the year—108 males and 106 females (17 were illegitimate)—giving a birth rate of 25·176 on the above-mentioned population. The births are slightly increasing and the deaths decreasing, as shown in the following:—Births in 1907, 202; in 1908, 211; in 1909, 214. Deaths in 1907, 132; in 1908, 135; in 1909, 111.

AGES AT DEATH.—Under 1 year, 18; 1 and under 5, 7; 5 and under 15, 4; 15 and under 35, 13; 35 and under 65, 30; 65 and under 80, 32; 80 and under 90, 5; and over 90, 2.

CAUSES OF DEATH.—20 were due to heart disease, 20 to disease of the respiratory organs, 12 of which were from phthisis, 6 to pneumonia, 1 to bronchitis, and 1 to pleurisy; 9 to disease of the nervous system, 7 to senile decay, 7 to premature birth, 7 inquest cases, 5 to other forms of tubercular disease than phthisis, 4 to influenza, 3 to measles, 3 to marasmus, or wasting; 2 to diphtheria, 1 to whooping cough, 1 to diarrhoea, 1 to acute rheumatism, 1 to alcoholism, 1 case not certified, and 1 certified by the Coroner without inquest; 10 cases were certified as due to some form or other of malignant disease.

CASES NOTIFIED.—221 cases of infectious disease were notified as follows:—Measles, 181; Whooping Cough, 15; Diphtheria, 10; Scarlet Fever, 8; Phthisis, 4; Erysipelas, 3; against an aggregate of 48 in 1908 and 93 in 1907.

HOSPITAL.—Three cases have been treated in the Hospital—2 of scarlet fever and 1 suspected case of diphtheria.

SLAUGHTER-HOUSE.—Hexham has no private slaughter-houses. The public slaughter-house is regularly inspected; all infected carcasses are destroyed; three carcasses were condemned during the year. The slaughter-houses were opened in November 1902, and since then 21 carcasses and 1 calf have been destroyed.

HOUSING.—The tenemented property is improved, and there is less overcrowding. A good deal remains to be done. I would especially draw your attention to the property No. 8, East Gate, and Jacob's Ladder, in Gilesgate. They are unfit for human habitation, and I ask you to have them closed. "The Mystery" is improved, and I trust, under the present management, the improvement may continue. The tenants in this case are more at fault than the owners. This also applies to certain property in Gilesgate, Nos. 12 and 14. In both cases greater care should be taken in the selection of tenants, and, unless this is so, I would advise action to be taken against the tenants.

WATER SUPPLY.—The water supply is good and, so far, plentiful.

SEWERAGE.—The sewerage and drainage is efficient and the septic sewage works have worked satisfactorily.

SCAVENGING.—The scavenging has been good, including the daily removal of all ashes and refuse.

MIDDEN PRIVIES.—There are no midden privies in Hexham, the water carriage system embracing the whole of the town.

OBNOXIOUS TRADES.—There are no obnoxious trades.

FACTORIES.—The various factories, workshops, and out-workers' rooms have been visited and found satisfactory.

MILK.—The milk question, which has attracted considerable public attention for the past few years, is one of great import to the public and to the farmer. To the public that they may be supplied with pure, clean, unadulterated milk, and to the farmer that he is not unduly harrassed by unnecessary interference in the carrying out of his business—a business by no means without difficulty, requiring great care and technical knowledge. In visiting the various dairies in your district in the autumn, they were found, upon the whole, satisfactory. In some, the byres, structurally, are exceptionally good and well cared for; in others, a good deal more could be wished. They are all better cared for than formerly; the milk kept in more suitable places and a keener interest shown in attempting to carry out the necessary sanitary requirements. Milk should be supplied from healthy, non-tuberculous cows, and great care taken to have any infected animal separated from the others and the milk not used. Early writers mention two ^{cases} of tampering with milk, viz., the adding of water and skimming, or taking off part of the cream. We must, however, add a third—using so-called preservatives, which are injurious to health. Considering the great importance of a pure milk supply, should the Council not have the technical advice of a Veterinary Surgeon at their disposal? I have during the year examined the milk from 17 of the 21 dairies from which the town is supplied with milk and a sample from the majority of the 10 milkshops in the town.

The difference in the percentage of cream in the various samples is so great that I ask your permission to have any suspected case bacteriologically examined.

SURVEYOR'S REPORT.—Annexed is the Surveyor's report, as follows:—

DRAINS and SEWERS laid under my supervision.—4" pipes, 3,330 feet; 6" pipes, 516 feet; 12" pipes, 375 feet.

WATER MAINS.—During the past year, 325 feet of 3" and 279 feet of 2" water main have been laid, 85 old service pipes renewed, and 30 new connections made. The average daily yield of water from the Ladle Wells, according to fortnightly gaugings at the High Shield Reservoir, has been 311,400 gallons.

NUISANCES.—Defects have been dealt with as follows:—

Defective Water Fittings, &c.	-	-	-	158
Insufficient or Unsatisfactory Water Supply	-	-	-	24
Property in Unsatisfactory Condition	-	-	-	26
Accumulations of Rubbish and Manure, &c.	-	-	-	15
Defective Yard and Surface Paving	-	-	-	15
Choked Drains	-	-	-	15
Defective Drains	-	-	-	14
Bad Smells from Sewers, Drains, Coal Gas, &c.	-	-	-	12
Overcrowding	-	-	-	12
Dilapidated Premises	-	-	-	9
Insufficient W.C. Accommodation and Drainage	-	-	-	5
Defective Eaves and Down Comers	-	-	-	5
Smoke Nuisances	-	-	-	5
Dirty Premises	-	-	-	4
Carcases Condemned and Destroyed	-	-	-	3
Miscellaneous Defects	-	-	-	35
Total				357

In addition to the above, premises where infectious diseases have occurred have been visited, and several defects have been remedied, after verbal intimation only, more especially with regard to water wastes.

NEW HOUSES.—12 new houses were certified as fit for habitation during 1909, making the total number certified since the census of 1901 to be 392.

SPECIAL WORK.—In addition to the ordinary routine, the following work may be noted:—

PRIVATE STREETS.—The following private streets have been made up with tar macadam:—The front streets to St. George's Road and Eilan's Terrace, and the back streets to St. Hilda's Road, Kingsgate Terrace, St. Oswald's Road, Hextol Terrace, and St. Cuthbert's Terrace, while Tynedale Terrace and Windmill Hill roads have been made up with ordinary macadam.

Cowgarth, from the Post Office to the Police Station Yard, has also been made up with tar macadam.

Special mention may be made of the improvement carried out at the east end of Haugh Lane, where the roadway has been widened from an average of about 20 feet to 36 feet, and the old pavement stones replaced with tar macadam.

The Surveyor's report shows a considerable amount of work done during the year 12 new houses were certified as fit for habitation, making a total of 392 since the last census. Granted the accepted average of five to each house, it would bring your population up to 9,031. Unwilling to base my calculations too high, I have taken 8,500, although I think that is an under estimate.

SCHOOLS.—A memorandum from the Local Government Board draws my attention to the medical inspection of school children in Elementary Schools. This Act is carried out by the "Education Authority," with whom I am in no way associated.

So far as I understand it, it must cause overlapping with the Sanitary Authority, and, as in all cases of overlapping, must lead to needless expenditure of public money.

LODGING-HOUSES.—The common lodging-houses have been regularly visited during the year, and, although not models, I am glad to say they are improved.

MIDWIVES AND NOTIFICATION OF BIRTHS ACTS.—Neither the Midwives nor Notification of Births Acts are in operation in Hexham. We have no midwives, I am pleased to say, and I do not think the Notification of Births Act would benefit us.

GENERAL REMARKS.

A death rate of 11·764 is the lowest I have had to report to you. The infantile death rate, which is 84·112, is a great reduction upon the abnormally high death rate of last year, which was 184·834 per 1,000 births, under 1 year of age, and under the average of the last 5 years (i.e., from 1905 to 1909, inclusive), which was 118·421. You will observe there are 10 deaths due to preventible disease, which is disappointing. We passed through a severe outbreak of measles, necessitating the closing of the schools for some weeks. The most unsatisfactory point of the death rate is the slight increase of phthisis and other forms of tubercular disease. That Hexham, with its many natural and sanitary advantages, should be competing with the other Urban Authorities of Northumberland for the greatest number of such diseases, shows plainly we are somewhere at fault. In my last Annual Report, referring to phthisis, I say this is “mainly attributable to the structural condition of portions of the older parts of the town, in which you have a number of houses, without through ventilation, placed in narrow yards, in some instances with the soil abutting against the blank wall, causing dampness, having little light and less sunshine in these houses, and in other tenemented property permitting overcrowding.” These, gentlemen, with the Cattle Market, the retention of which you still hug with affection, are the principle cause of our unfortunate position as regards phthisis, such markets being now conclusively proven to be factors in the spread of phthisis.

The two Webb's lamps which were erected in March and April for the better ventilation of the sewers, have, I believe, been of much service. Their action is being carefully watched. What, then, are the requirements during the current year? I must ask you to give your attention to the milk supply, to the closing and improving of certain of the tenemented property, and to the suppression or removal of the Cattle Market, as herein reported, in order that the stigma of our unenviable position in the County as to phthisis may be removed.

I have again to thank the Clerk, the Surveyor, and the other officials for their unvaried kindness and ungrudging assistance during the year.

I am, Sir,

Your Obedient Servant,

DANIEL JACKSON, M.D.,

To JOHN A. BATY, ESQ.,

Medical Officer of Health.

Clerk, &c.,

Hexham Urban District Council.

Vital Statistics of Whole District during 1909 and Previous Years.

Year.	Population estimated to middle of each year.	Births		Total Deaths Registered in the District				Total deaths in Public Institu- tions in the District.	Deaths of Non residents registered in Public Insti't'ns in the District.	Deaths of Residents registered in Public Insti't'ns beyond the District.	Nett Deaths at all ages belonging to the District.	
		Number.	Rate,	At all Ages		Rate.	Number.				Rate.	
				Under 1 year of Age	Number.							Rate per 1000 Births registered
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1899..	7000	188	26.857	31	111.702	127	18.142	12	6	..	121	17.285
1900..	7000	177	25.285	29	163.728	154	22.000	24	12	..	142	20.285
1901..	7150	187	26.153	32	170.112	141	19.706	22	11	..	130	18.181
1902..	7500	198	26.400	16	80.808	114	15.200	16	8	..	107	14.133
1903..	7500	211	28.133	25	118.483	144	19.200	20	10	..	134	17.866
1904..	8000	215	26.875	31	144.186	157	19.625	18	9	..	148	18.500
1905..	8000	216	27.000	29	134.259	125	15.625	24	12	..	113	14.125
1906..	8250	212	25.696	22	105.773	139	16.848	25	13	..	126	15.260
1907..	8250	202	24.484	17	84.158	132	16.000	20	15	..	117	14.181
1908..	8500	211	24.823	38	180.094	135	15.882	21	6	..	129	15.176
Averages for years 1899-1908	7715	201	26.170	27	129.320	136	17.822	20	10	..	126	16.499
1909.	8500	214	25.176	19	88.785	111	13.058	18	11	..	100	11.764

* Rates in Columns 4, 8, and 13 calculated per 1,000 of estimated population.

NOTE.--The deaths to be included in Column 7 of this Table are the whole of those registered during the year as having actually occurred within the district or division. The deaths to be included in Column 12 are the number in Column 7, corrected by the subtraction of the number in Column 10 and the addition of the number in Column 11.

By the term "Non-residents" is meant persons brought into the district on account of sickness or infirmity, and dying in public institutions there; and by the term "Residents" is meant persons who have been taken out of the district on account of sickness or infirmity, and have died in public institutions elsewhere.

Area of District in acres (exclusive of
area covered by water)—5,149.

Total population at all ages.....7,071 } At
Number of inhabited houses1,298 } Census of
Average number of persons per house ..5 } 1901.

Cases of Infectious Disease Notified during the Year 1909.

Notifiable Disease.	Cases Notified in Whole District.						
	At all Ages.	At Ages—Years.					
		Under 1.	1 to 5	5 to 15	15 to 25	25 to 65	65 and upwds
Smallpox .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Cholera .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Diphtheria (including Membranous Croup)	10	..	1	5	2	2	..
Erysipelas	3	..	..	..	..	3	..
Scarlet Fever	8	..	1	6	1	..	..
Typhus Fever .. ..	..	..	.	..	..	..	..
Enteric Fever .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Relapsing Fever .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Continued Fever .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Puerperal Fever .. ..	..	..	..	.	..	..	..
Plague .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Whooping Cough	15	2	8	5	..	..	..
Measles	181	2	74	101	2	2	..
Phthisis	4	..	..	..	1	3	..
Totals	221	4	84	117	6	10	..

District not divided into localities.

Isolation Hospital situate in District.

Total available beds, 24.

Number of diseases that can be concurrently treated, 4.

Causes of, and Ages at, Death during Year 1909.

Causes of Death.	Deaths at the subjoined ages of Residents whether occurring in or beyond the District.							Total Deaths whether of Residents or non- Residents in Public Institutions in the District
	All Ages.	Under 1.	1 and under 5	5 and under 15	15 and under 25	25 and under 65	65 and upwards	
Smallpox .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Measles	3	1	2	..	..	..	..	..
Scarlet Fever .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Whooping-cough	1	1	1	..	..	..	..	..
Diphtheria and Membranous Croup	2	..	2	..	..	..	..	..
Croup .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Fever { Typhus .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Enteric .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Other continued .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Epidemic Influenza	4	..	..	..	..	1	3	..
Cholera .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Plague .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Diarrhœa	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..
Enteritis .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Puerperal Fever .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Erysipelas .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Phthisis (Pulmonary Tuberculosis)	12	..	..	1	2	7	2	4
Other Tubercular Diseases	5	..	1	1	1	2	..	..
Cancer, Malignant Disease	5	..	..	..	..	3	2	..
Bronchitis	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..
Pneumonia	6	..	..	1	2	1	2	..
Pleurisy	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	..
Other Diseases of Respiratory Organs	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	..
Alcoholism .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Cirrhosis of Liver }	3	..	..	..	..	2	1	2
Venereal Diseases .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Premature Birth	7	7	..	..	..	..	..	..
Diseases and Accidents of Parturition	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..
Heart Diseases	20	..	..	..	..	9	11	2
Accidents	4	..	..	..	2	1	1	..
Suicides .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
All other causes	34	8	..	1	..	8	17	8
All causes	111	19	6	4	7	36	39	18

Infantile Mortality during the Year 1909.

Deaths from stated Causes in Weeks and Months under One Year of Age.

CAUSE OF DEATH		Under 1 week	1-2 Weeks	2-3 Weeks	3-4 Weeks	Total under 1 Month	1-2 Months	2-3 Months	3-4 Months	4-5 Months	5-6 Months	6-7 Months	7-8 Months	8-9 Months	9-10 Months	10-11 Mos.	11-12 Mos.	Total Deaths under 1 year
All Causes	Certified	6	1	2	..	9	2	..	3	1	..	..	..	3	..	..	..	18
	Uncertified	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Common Infectious Diseases	Smallpox	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Chickenpox	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Diarrhoeal Diseases	Measles	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Scarlet Fever	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Wasting Diseases	Diphtheria (including Membranous Croup)	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Whooping Cough	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Tuberculous Diseases	Diarrhoea, all forms	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Enteritis, Muco-enteritis, Gastro-enteritis	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Other Causes	Gastritis, Gastro-intestinal Catarrh	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Premature Birth	5	1	..	..	6	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	7
Tuberculous Diseases	Congenital Defects	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Injury at Birth	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Other Causes	Want of Breast-milk, Starvation	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Atrophy, Debility, Marasmus	..	..	1	..	1	1	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4
Tuberculous Diseases	Tuberculous Meningitis	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Tuberculous Peritonitis, Tuberculous Mesenterica	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Other Causes	Other Tuberculous Diseases	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Erysipelas	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Tuberculous Diseases	Syphilis	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Rickets	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Other Causes	Meningitis (not Tuberculous)	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Convulsions	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	2
Other Causes	Bronchitis	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
	Laryngitis	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Other Causes	Pneumonia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Suffocation, overlying	..	..	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Other Causes	Other Causes	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
		7	1	2	..	10	2	..	3	1	..	..	..	3	..	..	..	19

Births in the Year—Legitimate, 17. Deaths from all Causes at all Ages, 111.
Deaths in the year of Legitimate Infants, 16. Illegitimate Infants, 3.
Population (estimated to middle of 1908), 8,500.